

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy.

I feel increasingly discouraged as a citizen by this pattern of control of how my public airwaves are used, and watch sadly as respect for media continues to sink. I am 52 now, and reflect back on a stint, in my early college days, as a journalism-inclined student. The values of objectivity and clear separation between news (including documentary), and editorial comment seemed to be ethically clear even for entirely privately-owned print media. I believe that these standards are even more critical for our publically owned airwave use.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.